

## Food Drying/ Production Plant

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### Abstract

Tropical Horticulture Enterprises (T.H.E) is a Ugandan initiative that works to add value to fruits, bananas and vegetables. The main output of this initiative are processed dried fruits, fresh fruits, banana flour and fresh vegetables. T.H.E taps the 22% of banana and fruit loss at farm gate due to failure to access markets timely, besides poor handling knowledge and poor storage facilities in rural agricultural producing areas in the country. The initiative boasts of linkage with farmers and it has a bottom up network through which farmers have benefited in various trainings. The main objective of this initiative is to improve farmer's incomes through providing an alternative avenue and market access to foods produced and ferried to markets without any value addition. This initiative adds value by way of preservation through sun drying of fruits and bananas. It also vacuum packs fresh fruits and vegetables. The dried bananas are milled into flour which provides an additional food variety to maize flour and rice on the market for the above crops. It promotes employment opportunities in the country due to multipliers effect, boosts nutrition values and maintain food security in the country and the region at large.

Keywords: Farmer, Horticulture, Markets, Uganda,

### Introduction

Tropical Horticulture Enterprises is a private company in Uganda founded in 2002. its engaged in agribusiness at regional and international level . it deals in processing fruits like bananas , pineapples, jackfruits ,pawpaw and mangoes by sun drying and vacuum packing fresh fruits and vegetables.

Its noted that in Uganda and most developing countries, there is a high farm loss for bananas, fruits and vegetables during the harvest period which has consolidated poverty level and undercut development at the grassroots level, thus government efforts to promote private initiatives in the rural development.

Focus in value addition industries of local produce and active promotion of exports production in non traditional exports are awakening the spirit of local investment and entrepreneurship in our country its against this background that such initiatives are taking a step in the direction of reducing poverty in communities by reducing agricultural production loss through value addition.

The plant aims at adding value by way of shelf life extension for bananas, fruits and vegetable products with a mission to create more local, regional and global competitiveness for dried and fresh bananas, fruits and vegetables.

The industry is located in the centre of the most producing part of Uganda. It procures these products from local farmers. We have developed a profile list of growers, who registered with us and are able to benefit from the trainings we offer as a way of building their capacities in agriculture production. We buy mangoes, pineapples, bananas, pawpaws and vegetables such as cabbages, onions, mushrooms plus a variety of vegetables according to the demands.

We provide the famous with vegetable and mushrooms seeds and deduct off their costs at harvest periods. This gives them confidence to plan ahead for the produce.

Bananas are subjected to Industrial Processing which includes dehydration, milling, and impregnation of nutrients, vacuum sealing and packaging.

Fruits are processed, dried packed and labeled.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are processed and vacuum sealed in their fresh form. Fruits are washed, peeled, sliced, laid in the driers and then packed.

Key pillars of the methods includes empowerment of peasants with markets, training them in better fruit and vegetable production practices, Thus creation of employment opportunities (with in and outside the project) and improvement on the prevailing social and economic infrastructure.

### **Results**

- We have established collecting centers in various areas and in various products.
- We have combined efforts with existing exporters who are buying our products and sell to the international markets.
- We have established working relationships with the University of Makerere to equip us with extra know how.
- We are working with the Uganda Institute in Research and Development to train our workers and provide us with better knowledge and equipments.
- We have developed an extensive state of art capacity for drying technologies.
- We have ensured that much surplus of fruits and vegetables are brought and processed.
- We have established information networks for the purpose of enabling farmers to learn of the market opportunities offered, share experiences and pass on new useful production tips.
- We are in a process of attaining our own production certificates to enable us to export to own markets.

### **Discussion**

Having identified the basics of this project i.e. availability of inputs, production technology and market potentials. The need was seen to get deep into the other elements that would make the project a success. The major problem of entry of Uganda bananas and fruits on the world market is quality rather absence of markets. With the collapsing of the main cash crops say cotton and coffee on the market, farmers resort to growing of fruits, bananas and vegetables for both food security and economic subsistence on the surplus production.

This has however increased their acreage and hence the projects assurance of buying and increasing on the shelf life to minimize wastage.

Bearing in mind the steady and long term results of high yield its deemed timely to take advantage and use it in producing high grade fresh bananas, fruits and vegetables for processing. This guarantees market for farmers resulting into increased incomes for them as well.

Availability of markets both local and external for the processed fruits, favorable government policies to support and promote efforts at processing local produce, the regional integration gradually making a come back, gives this project a strong economic potential self sustainability and profitability insight.

### **Conclusion**

The potential of marrying banana flour and dried fruits in the confectionary Industry for both local and foreign markets has stimulated the processing of bananas and fruits.

The extension of shelf life for all products has hence increased the production.

The need for food is a basic requirement for life and all people need it for survival so a lot of social, cultural and economic factors dictate the type of frequency and quality bought and consumed.

Because processing brakes the bulk standardizes the product and gives it a long shelf life, it gives all opportunity to explore global markets to serve not only Ugandans in the Diaspora but also attract new consumers in the far off world wide market.

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